

## **Amendments to the claims**

Claims 1-15 (canceled)

Claim 16 (original): A method of making a semiconductor device comprising:

forming a conductive layer on a substrate;

forming a dielectric layer on the conductive layer;

etching a via through the dielectric layer, the via being located above a portion of the conductive layer; and

introducing a dopant into that portion of the conductive layer.

Claim 17 (original): The method of claim 16 further comprising:

forming a barrier layer on the conductive layer;

forming the dielectric layer on the barrier layer; and

etching the via through a portion of the barrier layer, after etching the via through the dielectric layer, to expose the portion of the conductive layer above which the via is located.

Claim 18 (original): The method of claim 17 wherein the dopant is introduced into the exposed portion of the conductive layer by depositing a dopant containing layer onto that exposed portion.

Claim 19 (original): The method of claim 17 wherein the dopant is introduced into the exposed portion of the conductive layer by ion implanting the dopant into that exposed portion.

Claim 20 (original): The method of claim 17 wherein the dopant is introduced into the exposed portion of the conductive layer by subjecting that exposed portion to a gas that contains the dopant.

Claim 21 (original): A method of making a semiconductor device comprising:

forming a dielectric layer on a substrate;

etching a via through the dielectric layer and a trench into the dielectric layer;

filling the via and trench with a conductive layer;

exposing a portion of the conductive layer that lies above the via; and

introducing a dopant into the exposed portion of the conductive layer.

Claim 22 (original): The method of claim 21 wherein the dopant is introduced into the exposed portion of the conductive layer by depositing a dopant containing layer onto that exposed portion.

Claim 23 (original): The method of claim 21 wherein the dopant is introduced into the exposed portion of the conductive layer by ion implanting the dopant into that exposed portion.

Claim 24 (original): The method of claim 21 wherein the dopant is introduced into the exposed portion of the conductive layer by subjecting that exposed portion to a gas that contains the dopant.